29 SEPTEMBER 2017 / FREE EVERY FRIDAY

# NME

## Miley Cyrus

MUSIC
FILM
STYLE

Making America Great Again

# NME

## Hello...

DONALD TRUMP MUST really hate Miley Cyrus. A hero to the queer community, an icon to troubled teenagers, a gender-neutral, pansexual superstar who champions the rights of marginalised groups across America while expressing individuality in whatever way suits best in that moment; whether that's strapping on a massive rubber cock onstage or smoking industrial-grade skunk and getting psychedelic with Wayne Coyne. These are the things that Trump loathes, the things he wants to stamp down, the people he likes to depict as the enemies of Uncle Sam.

Trump's vision has no place for kooks. In Miley's America, they're the headline act.

So it's exciting that the USA's most subversive megastar has seemingly gone mainstream, because that presents something even more dangerous to Old Donny and his White Power ways. If Miley Cyrus can tell young, mainstream America (and obviously therefore the entire world) that you can be whoever you want to be and feel however you want to feel, it only reinforces the hope that Trump's ascendancy to president is the last fart of a dying dog, and not the beginning of the end of the world. Go on Miley, Make America *really* Great Again…

**MIKE WILLIAMS**
*Editor-in-Chief*
**@itsmikelike**

**The *NME* review of the new Wolf Alice album p35**

COVER STORY

**24**
## Miley Cyrus
**"I don't want to be over-feminised, but I'm not masculine either. I'm just myself."**

FEATURES

**28**
## Alvvays
**Masters of the art of writing ridiculously catchy indie-pop tunes**

**31**
## Action Bronson
**"This pasta dish has been in my family for over 7,000 years"**

SECTIONS

AGENDA 7

RADAR 33

live 43

REGULARS

17 Things We Like 19 What's On Your Headphones?
40 Under The Radar 48 Soundtrack Of My Life

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COVER PHOTO: SONY. CONTENTS PHOTO: FIONA GARDEN

## GOOD WEEK

**JENNIFER LOPEZ**
Donated $1 million to hurricane victims in Puerto Rico. What a nice person.

**EMILIA CLARKE**
Finished her bits in the *Star Wars* Han Solo film. "Fun 2 work with," tweeted director Ron Howard.

**TOM HARDY**
Dastardly crim Charles Bronson would like Mr Hardy to impregnate his girlfriend. Yikes.

**DAVID JASON**
Del Boy's been assigned round-the-clock security after a "real threat" on his life

## BAD WEEK

Lady Gaga in *Five Foot Two*

# Inside the new Lady Gaga doc

***Five Foot Two* is a deeply moving look at what it's like to be one of the most talked-about pop icons on the planet. Here's what we learned**

### EVEN IF YOU'RE LADY GAGA, YOU STILL HAVE TO BATTLE THE PATRIARCHY

Whether it's the break-up of her relationship with Taylor Kinney or the sexism she faces in the music industry, Gaga is sick of your s**t. "When producers say 'You'd be nothing without me', those men have so much power, they can have women in a way that no other men can," she explains. Mark Ronson, who produced her most recent album 'Joanne', was an exception. "So many men I worked with and dated have made me feel like I wasn't good enough on my own. I don't feel that with Mark."

### SHE WISHES MADONNA WOULD JUST SAY IT TO HER FACE

Comparisons between the two have been made since Gaga first appeared on the scene in 2008. Madge remained tight-lipped on Gaga until 2011, when she deemed her single 'Born This Way' "reductive". In *Five Foot Two*, Gaga calls out Madonna for not speaking directly to her, saying, "Telling me you think I'm a piece of s**t through the media is the same as a guy passing me a note saying, 'My buddy thinks you're hot'."

### SHE LIVES HER LIFE IN CHRONIC PAIN

This doc shows the bravery Gaga has shown for years while battling a hip injury and fibromyalgia – a muscular disorder that causes all over body pain – which affects her daily life. "If I couldn't afford all these people to help me every day, I don't know what I would do", Gaga says about the daily massage and physiotherapy she receives.

### SHE WANTS BABIES

Several times in the doc she talks about having children. In a personal moment, she is seen at a christening, watching on with love as the priest wets the baby's head. Later she's seen asking to hold the baby. But fans can rest easy that Mama Gaga will be performing for decades. "I want to be doing this until I'm an old lady," she says.

WORDS: CHARLOTTE GUNN. PHOTOS: REX FEATURES, GETTY IMAGES

# WILD AT HEART

**Miley Cyrus is back, but not as we know her. After the in-your-face 'Bangerz' and the trippy '…Dead Petz', new album 'Younger Now' sees the pop star embracing her Nashville roots, *not* sticking her tongue out so much and, she tells Dan Stubbs, writing music that's "for everyone"**

In this post-'Look What You Made Me Do' world, you might expect a phone conversation with Miley Cyrus to begin, "I'm sorry, the old Miley can't come to the phone right now. Why? Oh, 'cos she's dead."

Instead she is hurriedly describing her morning at her Malibu estate, Rainbow Land. "I've got seven dogs they're going a little bit berserk per usual," she says. It's 10am, but Miley's been up for hours. "I wake up with the wheels turning so everyone can expect a 7am, 8am call from me every day."

This might come as a surprise to the casual admirer of Miley Cyrus as we know her: a weed-smoking hellraiser who denounced gender, twerked with a foam finger and was mostly naked for the best part of three years. It was a path that reached its artful conclusion with 2015's Milky Milky Milk tour, during which she suckled a male dancer and wore a strap-on dildo for the duration of the show.

But this year, Miley went… mild. 'Malibu', the first single from new album 'Younger Now', sees her singing the virtues of her California home. Beneath the surface, Miley is still preaching the same liberties – but in a package that wouldn't shock a vicar. And that might just be the point…

**After everything you've done recently, putting out something a bit more 'normal' is just about the most subversive thing you could do. Is that the intention?**
"Yes, actually. I wanted to be more straightforward… [I'm] saying, 'I want to sell records so this is how I'm going to be'. I feel like I have nothing to prove. I think little parts of everyone that I've been in my life are starting to come through in this one kind of era of the music that I'm doing, because I really can embrace what I've been before rather than trying to distance myself from it."

**You did recently say of the 'Wrecking Ball' video, "I'm never living that down"…**
"You know, I should f**king be grateful every f**king day for that song, and I am. I think people look at things that they've done and there is this sense of shame, or 'I wish I wouldn't have done that' – not because I'm naked, by the way; it's because I feel like I'm in a deeper songwriting place… Lyrically I'm less impressed with that song for me right now. I feel like it doesn't reflect who I am now, but that's fine because it's not supposed to… I'm sure I'll say the same thing about this record at some point."

**What does this new album reflect about who you are now?**
"[Singles] 'Malibu' and 'Younger Now' are obviously two f**king very different visuals in a way, but what binds them together is that they are both me. For 'Bangerz' I was so *one way*, I was so 'This is who I am, there's nothing that's gonna change it', and you know, I did that on '[Miley Cyrus & Her] Dead Petz' too. Now, I think I have more of an open mind where I'm like, 'OK, I can be a bunch of different things every day', I don't have to be so locked into myself because then I'm putting those walls and borders around myself that I tell everyone else not to give in to."

**You mentioned '…Dead Petz'. Those shows, the dildo… Did you see yourself as an art provocateur, or were you just having a laugh?**
"It's more that it's funny, and I think that it's also normalising. [I wore] the unicorn dildo to normalise women with penises because there are women with penises and [normalising that is] a part of [my charity] Happy Hippie. And that's a part of allowing people to be sexually free and not having to hide from their sexuality, whether it's the way that they were born [or] the way that they transitioned. So that was, in a way, political rather than provocative."

**Have we seen the last of the tongue-out, topless Miley, or has she just gone away for a bit?**
"I don't even know how to answer that. Because I've always had a tongue and I've always had tits."

**Did it become a bit of a burden, always having to be outrageous?**
"Yeah, I still feel pressure from myself in a way. I still really want to be an entertainer and *show up* in my own way and I don't want to look like anybody else. With the short hair thing, it was an androgynous, sexy feeling, which is what I want people to feel like. I don't wanna be over-feminised, but I'm not masculine either – I'm just myself. [What] people don't really understand [about] gender fluidity is by feeling nothing, I feel everything. So I feel like this record is expressing that more than ever. I really can wake up one day and feel like 'Malibu', but then I can also feel like I want to be Roy Orbison."

**You really opened up the gender fluidity conversation, to the point where you can dress in 'male' clothes in the 'Younger Now' video and no one even comments. Is that success?**
"I got to normalise it a little bit more. I did it in a less aggressive way where it was subliminally allowing all audiences to be a part of it and enjoy it. From the outside, like you said, '…Dead Petz' wasn't a record for everyone… I think it ended up shutting some doors in the way of people making themselves less mentally available to listen. They think, 'I'm already pissed off so I'm not listening to that, she's crazy'. In a way, 'Younger Now' is really about ageism and sexism too because I feel like as women get older it's so hard, and I'm watching Madonna do it with such grace and such style and people still attack her… People just want to talk about how she shouldn't do a f**king cartwheel at the Super Bowl and it's like, why? Why can't you still wear a grill, why can't you still be a part of pop culture?"

**Speaking of iconic women, your godmother, Dolly Parton, is on the album. She mentions Dollywood, which got me thinking: Rainbow Land theme park…**
"That's actually a genius idea. I like to think that I already live at the Rainbow Land theme park. My house is completely rainbow."

**And 'Rainbowland' is also the name of the song you wrote together…**
"Yep, and it's also very political. One line is such a Dolly lyric – it says, '*We are rainbows, me and you / Every colour, every hue*'. And it's about all these different races and genders and religions, if we all did come together to create and said, 'Hey, we're different, that's awesome, let's not change to be the same, let's stay different but let's come together anyway.' Because a rainbow's not a rainbow without all the different colours."

**You've mentioned politics a few times, and you were a vocal supporter of Bernie Sanders and, later, Hillary Clinton. Where's the global politics on the album?**
"Well, 'Inspired', I wrote that for Hillary Clinton [but] I'm not fighting fire with fire, hate with hate. I'm fighting hate with love. I'm doing this concert this week in Vegas and for 'Party In The USA' the screens will say 'education' and 'healthcare' and 'equality',

Miley in the 'Wrecking Ball' video

"I'm fighting hate with love"

'justice', 'freedom', 'liberation', 'expression'. These things are what make up our country. It's not a party in the USA if it's filled with hate, discrimination, walls, violence, all these things."

**Do you regret saying that you would leave the USA if Trump won?**
"I didn't leave the country."

**Exactly.**
"I'm not f**king leaving the country, that's some ignorant s**t, that's dumb. Because that's me abandoning my country when I think I've got a good thing to say to my country. And trust me, I hear every day on my Instagram, 'Just leave already! When are you going to leave?' Well, that's not going to be any good. Does it really matter where I am? Because wherever I am, my f**king voice is gonna be heard, and I'll make sure of it."

**Did you know there's a university course you can do called 'The Sociology of Miley Cyrus'?**
"I've heard about that."

**Apparently it examines identity, entertainment, media and fame using you as a lens. What advice would you give to the students?**
"I would say that for what I do there isn't a divide between fame, music, socials, being who you are, identity. The part of that I think is the most important would be identity and allowing your identity to inspire and to have your music and to have everything that you put out visually to coincide with your identity. And not have, for example, a Hannah Montana life… Not have the real you and the famous you. Because I think there are people living that… There are Hannah Montanas in this f**king industry. People are fans of someone who isn't the person that they are on the inside. And the person that I am on the inside is the person that I project to people on the outside. Does that make sense?"

**Taylor Swift's 'Look What You Made Me Do' plays with her multiple identities. What did you make of that?**
"I don't really know much about it… I haven't really heard it."

**I read you've never heard an Ed Sheeran song. Is that right?**
"I have now, and you know who is the biggest fan? My dad is the biggest f**king Ed Sheeran fan. Every time we see him at a show my dad is freaking out on how talented he is. So now everyone knows my dad is fangirl for Ed Sheeran."

**Your spend a lot of time with your dad, 'Achy Breaky Heart' singer Billy Ray Cyrus, on his farm in Tennessee. Can you milk a cow?**
"I could but it's not on my everyday list that I do."

**Neither is smoking weed any more. Are you still on the wagon?**
"Oh yeah, but I still think it's an amazing, medicinal, awesome thing that needs to be legal everywhere."

**Do you find you have more free time than you used to?**
"Right now, I just can't turn my f**king brain off, I'm just creating all the time. That's the only hard part. I just never get to that state where I'm just going to watch TV."

She might not know what happened in the season six cliffhanger of *Game Of Thrones*, then, but that creative seam has delivered Miley an album that's pretty clever once you think about it: a sugared pill in which her righteous ideology hides in pop-country ditties. She came in like a wrecking ball. Now she's line dancing on the rubble.

**Miley's new album, 'Younger Now', is out now**

NME

PHOTOS: SONY, @PIXELDUSTDIGITAL

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**SHANIA TWAIN**
***Come On Over***
Canadian country queen Shania's huge mainstream breakthrough was full of sassiness, soul and pop shimmer.

# Rhinestone cowgirl

**Grab your cowboy boots because Miley Cyrus' sixth album sees her going all country and western**

**MILEY CYRUS**
***Younger Now***
★★★★☆
POP COUNTRY ROOTSY

SHE MIGHT STILL BE ONLY 24, but Miley Cyrus's career has already come full circle. The child of country royalty – her father is Billy Ray Cyrus of 'Achy Breaky Heart' fame, her godmother Dolly Parton and Waylon Jennings showed her how to play guitar – she broke out over a decade ago as tween idol Hannah Montana. After becoming a global sensation she began releasing records under her own name, pivoting from straight-up pop to naked wrecking-ball swinging and experimental psychedelic weed rock faster than it took Taylor Swift to start morphing into Lorde. But now Miley has put the bong back on the shelf, slipped her cowboy boots back on and returned to her Tennessee roots.

From the exceptional cover art – which sees her quiffed, rhinestoned and leathered up like the love child of Elvis and Lady Gaga – to the tight 11 tracks inside, this is a glossy mainstream version of the Nashville sound that has more in common with Shania Twain than the new school of cool country, like Third Man Records signing Margo Price. Miley's version of country music, however, retains the edge she's spent the past five years cultivating; the jaunty 'Rainbowland' – which features backing vocals from Dolly – hints at her LGBTQ activism, while the delicate, fiddle-laced 'Inspired' – which was debuted at the One Love Manchester benefit concert – was written with Hillary Clinton, for whom Miley vocally campaigned last year, in mind. This is by no means a political album, however – more the sound of a young woman having fun with her history. The title track is a meditative justification of her multiple personalities ("*Change is a thing you can count on*"), 'Malibu' an EDM Mumford & Sons, 'I Would Die For You' a soppy No-Doubt-by-way-of-Dixie-Chicks ballad, and 'Love Someone' lets her inner darkness show. Who knows which Miley Cyrus will emerge after the rootsy and real 'Younger Now', but we recommend enjoying Country Miley for as long as she lasts.
**Leonie Cooper**

PHOTO: @PIXELDUSTDIGITAL